

Rain delays Business 31 work

BY NANCY BENDER
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Due to the recent rain-fall, construction work on Business 31 east of the junction with U.S. 31 has been delayed. During Monday morning's Miami County Board of Commissioners meeting, a representative for the company working on the project reported on construction progress.

"We've had a little bit of rain, so the crew will not be paving (Monday)," said Alex Janeczek, resident project representative for American Structurepoint Inc. "If there's no rain Tuesday and Wednesday, we will be paving. After Thanksgiving, we'll be bringing in a crane to set structures and we'll be working on driveways along the road."

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U.S. Postal Service contract negotiations exceed Nov. 20 deadline

2nd continuance
won't affect
mail services

BY JONATHAN KLEYER
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Contract negotiations between the United States Postal Service and two unions are continuing past the negotiation deadlines, but will not stop mail services.

Negotiations with the American Postal Workers Union and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association were originally to be completed by Nov. 20, according to a USPS press release. Negotiations with the NLCA have been declared a failure, but APWU negotiations have been extended twice.

"I can tell you that (APWU) contract negotiations have been extended to Dec. 1," said Kim Yates, USPS media contact for Indiana. "The contracts are national, so all employees would be affected."

Yates said negotiations with the NRCA began Sept. 13, and negotiations with the APWU began Sept. 1. She commented that her office does not have any more detailed information about the negotiations than what the national office had already released.

According to information released by the USPS, employees are not permitted to strike because Congress designated the USPS an essential service to the nation. The current contract is extended when contract negotiations are extended, and if negotiations fail, as with the NLCA, a three-member panel is appointed with a representative for

tral arbitrator. The arbitrator makes the final decision.

Yates explained that there are four unions that represent USPS employees.

"There are different unions that cover people who perform different duties," Yates said. "There are actually two other unions who cover people who handle still other duties."

The USPS reports APWU represents 209,000 employees working as clerks, mechanics, vehicle drivers, custodians and administrative positions. NRLCA represents 115,000 employees who work delivering mail in rural and suburban areas.

The other two unions are the National Association of Letter Carriers and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, according to a USPS press release. The NALC represents employees who deliver mail in metropolitan areas, and the NPMH covers employees who work in mail processing plants and post offices. Contract negotiations with these two unions will take place next year.

In a statement about why the APWU negotiations have not been completed, APWU President Cliff Guffey said the union is pushing for measures to safeguard employee jobs. He did not specify what these measures would be.

The NRLCA released a statement saying their negotiations failed because the USPS wanted to freeze wages, cut benefits for current employees and put new employees on a lower salary schedule.

The USPS maintained in its press release that the organization needs

County Auditor's office gets clean grade

2009 findings
report Miami Co.
exceeds standards

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Usually the word "audit" makes individuals and corporations nervous. The same can be said about local government.

Earlier this month, the Indiana State Board of Accounts released its report of a completed audit for the financial and compliance of Miami County for 2009.

According to the report, Miami County received a better than passing grade.

"In our opinion, the financial information (examined from the Miami County Auditor's office) presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial information of the County for the year ended December 31, 2009, based on the criteria

set forth in the uniform compliance guidelines established by the Indiana State Board of Accounts," wrote the ISBOA in the report.

Though the examination was completed in August, the ISBOA did not release its findings until Nov. 10.

"We had a clean audit," said Miami County Auditor Jane Lilley. "There were absolutely no (non-compliance) findings. The examiner (from ISBOA) said she couldn't remember the last time Miami County had a clean audit."

"I'd love to give the ladies in my office raises, but the best I can do is give them ice cream. God has really blessed me with a really good crew of women to work with. It's all come together. We have a lot of work to do, but these ladies give us 110 percent all the time and it obviously shows. We are so grateful. In this day and age, that we would get a clean audit is so rewarding. We know we're not perfect, but we definitely try to do our best for the county."

Ind. reworks deer hunting rules

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — An outcry over proposed changes to Indiana's deer-hunting rules has sent the state's wildlife agency back to the drawing board to come up with a revision that addresses hunters' concerns over a proposed reduction of the number of days they would be able to shoot bucks.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources had been under pressure from lawmakers to cut the size of the state's deer population because the animals are eating

sions with cars. But *The Indianapolis Star* reports that last week the state's Natural Resources Commission pulled its proposed rules and began working on a revision that's expected in January.

After the commission proposed the rule changes earlier this year, more than 3,000 hunters sent protest letters and 300 showed up at public hearings to discuss the panel's proposal to add more "doe-hunting" days and reduce the more popular